

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicants thank the Examiner for the thorough examination of the claims as evidenced in the Office Action dated March 12, 2004. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the rejections to the claims contained therein.

Claims 1 and 3-12 have been amended. Claims 2 and 13-20 have been canceled. Claims 1 and 3-12 are currently pending in this application. No new matter has been entered by this amendment.

The Examiner objected to the drawings, asserting that various steps and components as recited in claims 7-20 are not shown therein. Applicants have canceled claims 13-20, thereby rendering moot the Examiner's objections to the drawings relating thereto. Applicants have amended the remaining claims to remove the language indicating steps. Applicants believe that the drawings, when taken with the specification, adequately and sufficiently describe the invention, and that the drawings show every feature of the invention. Applicants therefore request the Examiner to withdraw the objection to the drawings.

The Examiner objected to informalities in claims 1 and 16. Claim 16 has been canceled. Applicants respectfully decline to include the Examiner's suggested language into claim 1, believing there may be insufficient antecedent basis for the phrase "at least one of the standby communication slots" if so inserted.

The Examiner rejected claims 1-2, 7-8, and 10-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, asserting there is insufficient antecedent basis for certain phrases found in said claims. Applicants have canceled claims 13-20, thereby rendering moot the Examiner's rejections thereto. The Examiner's rejections to the remaining claims, shown below in italics, shall now be addressed:

a. *Claim 1 recites the limitation "one standby communication slot" and "at least one of the standby communication slots" in lines 6 and 11 respectively. Applicants believe it is not necessary to provide antecedent basis for the recitation in line 6 of "at least one standby communication slot." Applicants have amended line 11 to recite "at least one of the at least one standby communication slot,"*

which is consistent with the prior recitation of “at least one standby communication slot.”

b. *Claim 2 recited the limitation “the status of the designated standby communication slot” in line 2.* Applicants have canceled claim 2 and included the subject matter of claim 2 into independent claim 1, which now recites, in relevant part, “indicating a status of the designated standby communication slot....” Applicants believe such change of language adequately addresses the antecedent basis issue pointed out by the Examiner.

c. *Claim 7 recited the limitation “the at least one explicitly reserved standby communication slot” in lines 4 and 6.* Lines 2-4 of claim 7 recites the limitation of “explicitly reserving, by a transmitting node other than the specific neighbor node, at least one of the designated standby communication slots related to the specific neighbor node....” Applicants believe such limitation provides sufficient antecedent basis for the limitation “the at least one explicitly reserved standby communication slot” objected to by the Examiner.

d. *Claim 8 recites the limitation “the at least one standby communication slot” in line 3.* Applicants believe the recitation in claim 1 line 6 of “at least one standby communication slot” provides sufficient antecedent basis for the similar recitation in line 3 of claim 8.

e. *Claim 10 recited the limitation “communication channels” in line 2.* Applicants have amended claim 10 to remove the word “communication.” Applicants believe such amendment permits the recitations of claim 9 to serve as sufficient antecedent basis for claim 10 line 2.

f. *Claim 11 recited the limitation “the available options” and “the node’s own opportunity” in lines 4 and 5 respectively.* Applicants have amended line 5 to recite “any available option”. Applicants have further amended lines 3 and 5 to delineate a “first node.” It should now be clear which node is being addressed in line 5, and that sufficient antecedent basis now exists therefor.

g. *Claim 12 recited the limitation “the required number of channels”, “the fixed number of channels” and “the required number of communication slots” in lines 1, 3, 5 respectively.* Applicants have deleted “the required number of channels,” believing “a fixed number of channels” in line 5 appropriately recites the same concept. Applicants have amended “the required number of communication

slots" to read "how many time slots are required," and believe the limitations of claim 9 lines 2-3 provide sufficient antecedent basis for the amended phrase. Lastly, applicants have amended "the fixed number of channels" in line 5 to read "a fixed number of channels."

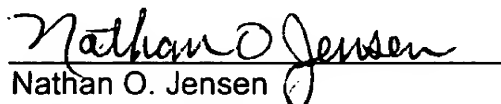
Applicants believe that upon consideration of the above amendments and explanations, the Examiner should withdraw the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

Turning now to the merits, the Examiner rejected claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,012,469 to Sardana in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,317,436 to Young. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection. Applicants have amended claim 1 to include the subject matter of claim 2, which the Examiner indicated would be allowable if so written. Claim 1 is therefore allowable, and all claims depending therefrom (i.e., claims 3-12) are also allowable.

The Examiner rejected claims 13 and 20 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,442,157 to Carter et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,719,868 to Young. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection, but note the rejection is rendered moot by applicants' cancellation of claims 13 and 20.

Accordingly, with entry of the amendments and consideration of the arguments and remarks contained herein, all pending claims are now allowable, and a notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney if further issues remain in the prosecution of this application.

Respectfully Submitted,


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